

away deeply impressed and convinced that President Biden has made a great choice. The Senate has already confirmed Judge Jackson three times on a bipartisan basis—most recently in June of 2021, when she was confirmed to the D.C. Circuit. The Senate should again confirm her with bipartisan support.

And when Judge Jackson is confirmed and becomes Justice Jackson, the first African-American woman ever to take a seat on the High Court, she will be an inspiration to so many across our country and around the globe. She will especially be a role model for young Black girls everywhere, showing them that in the United States of America, nothing is beyond their reach.

Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall once said:

Sometimes history takes things into its own hands.

History says it is time for Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, and I am honored to help her and the Court and our country make history with her confirmation.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

WOMEN VETERANS' HEALTHCARE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the significant legislative victories the Senate recently delivered for women veterans with the passage of two pieces of legislation to modernize breast cancer screening policies and the delivery of lifesaving care for women veterans.

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer for women. For women veterans and servicemembers, the incidence of breast cancer is estimated to be up to 40 percent higher than the general population.

Given the dangerous environments in which military members serve and additional risk factors associated with these locations, it is long overdue for the Department of Veterans Affairs to update its policies for administering mammograms.

We know early detection is crucial to preventing and treating breast cancer, so making sure those who are more vulnerable receive screenings at a younger age is not only reasonable but critical.

This would have helped Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas, a Marine veteran, who was unaware of her increased risk for breast cancer. She shared her memories of deployment to Fallujah in 2005 with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee last year.

She understood the risk associated with IEDs, and she remembers the burn pits—so commonplace, they were largely ignored—but she wasn't concerned with the impact of what she called "the flaming poison" surrounding her would have on her own health.

In a routine medical appointment with her VHA health provider in 2018, Kate thought it was odd she was recommended to undergo a mammogram. That exam subsequently led to her diagnosis of stage IV breast cancer. She was 38 years old.

That is devastating news for anyone to face, and I know the entire Senate joins me in praying for Kate as she continues her fight against cancer.

Nobody would blame her for focusing on her own health battle, but she knows her story wouldn't be the last if something didn't change.

That is why Kate is being an advocate for modernizing VA policies so other veterans don't experience the same struggles she is living with.

We honored her activism by crafting and passing the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans in Combat Environments Act. It will broaden veteran access to mammograms and also require the VA to compile data regarding the rates of breast cancer among members of the veteran and civilian population so we can continue improving procedures to better treat breast cancer patients.

The Senate also unanimously passed the MAMMO for Veterans Act to expand access to high-quality breast cancer screenings, improving imaging services in rural areas, and clinical trials through partnerships with the National Cancer Institute.

The VA is uniquely positioned to be a leader in the prevention and treatment of breast cancer. Taking full advantage of the Department's unique capabilities, resources, and outreach will help deliver the lifesaving care that veterans deserve.

Passage of the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act and the MAMMO for Veterans Act reflects the bipartisan support for improving veteran services and benefits. I appreciate Senator WYDEN's support and the leadership in the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and the leadership of Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman TESTER, who has been my reliable partner in advancing policies to improve the VA's care and services for women.

The VA estimates women make up 10 percent of our Nation's veteran population and continues to be the fastest growing population.

Last Congress, we made significant progress to expand VA's care and services for women with the passage of the landmark Deborah Sampson Act.

This was an important first step, and the legislation we passed last month continues to build on this foundation so we can fulfill the promise made to women who served in our Nation's uniform.

I am pleased the Senate has approved these policies, and I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to follow our example and quickly approve the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act and the MAMMO for Veterans Act so that they can be signed into law.

The women who have served our country in uniform need to know we are taking every step available to protect their health. These bills are an important downpayment in that mission. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

REMEMBERING THOMAS HORACE PORTER

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I come to the floor today to mourn the passing and celebrate the life of Thomas Horace Porter, my good friend and a man who could put a smile on my face even in the toughest times, on one of the most painful days of my life, while I was recovering at Walter Reed.

Among the peer visitors at Walter Reed Hospital, two of the most beloved were Tom and his wife Eleanor.

Tom was a gentle giant—a tall, smiling, then-74-year-old veteran who showed up at my bedside while I was still sedated to talk with my husband and mother and who came to visit again soon after I regained consciousness.

As a young Army lieutenant in the Korean war, Tom had lost both his legs in a landmine explosion. His heroic actions saving his men on that day earned Tom both the Silver Star in addition to the Purple Heart for his combat injuries.

During his months of recuperation back in the States, Eleanor—or El, as we all know her—an Army second lieutenant herself, had been one of his physical therapists.

The couple ended up married for more than 50 years. Tom continued to serve our Nation—this time as a civil servant, achieving the rank of Senior Executive Service in the Department of Agriculture. When Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom began and the wounded began flooding the wards at Walter Reed, Tom and El decided that they needed to help. They became peer visitors, and for the next 7 years, during twice weekly visits, they changed the lives of countless veterans who passed through that hospital, my own included.

When I was at Walter Reed, Tom made it his mission to talk with injured troops about the full lives they will lead after their devastating injuries.

A lot of the wounded warriors around me were really young, just 19 to 24 years old, lying in their hospital beds with limbs missing, burns to their faces and bodies, skulls crushed and encased in protective metal cages or helmets. They were all facing a future none of them had planned for. Like them, I had always assumed I would either die in combat or come home. The third option of coming home severely injured was never something that occurred to the majority of us.

Tom would walk in with that big smile of his and say: Hey, I was like you. Lost my legs at 22. But I recovered and I have had a full and regular life. I courted El after I lost my legs, and she and I have been married for 50 years and have wonderful kids and grandkids.

He reassured them that they could still have the lives they dreamed of, and his words had weight because he was living proof that that was possible.

He would wink and joke: Listen, having an amputation is better than having a puppy. Trust me, you won't have any trouble getting the ladies.

And then he would answer any questions they had because he knew they needed to hear from someone who had already journeyed on the road they were about to travel.

For years, Tom and El came into Walter Reed every Tuesday and Thursday without fail. El was known as the Cookie Lady because she would bring in dozens of homemade cookies that she collected from folks at her church.

For those of us who were in the hospital a long time, El knew our favorites. Mine were oatmeal raisin. If I was at physical therapy or in surgery or getting my wounds debrided when El made her rounds, she would make sure to leave a little bag of cookies by my bedside table. It was a real treat in the midst of the painful, early stages of recovery—something to look forward to every week.

Tom and El. El and Tom. The two of them became family for all of us. They would bring me and my husband to their lakeside home, feed us home-cooked meals, and let me fall asleep in their hammock overlooking the water, knowing the good that getting out of that fluorescent-lit hospital room would do me.

As someone who loved and was desperately missing the ocean, I can't begin to describe how restorative those days by the lake were.

There are no words for how right it felt to be drifting off to sleep to the sound of waves hitting the shore rather than to the beeps and the buzz of the hospital machines that had been my nightly soundtrack for too long.

And there is no possible way to express just how grateful I am to Tom and El for making that a possibility; for giving me a taste of home, right when I felt most like a stranger to myself; for enveloping me in something good and whole right when I felt untethered from what I felt was my life's mission; and for simply being who they were—kind and fierce, as compassionate for the people they loved as they were passionate about the causes that they believed in.

They were our advocates, our heroes, our Tom and our El.

I am so sorry for your loss, El. We miss Tom every single day. Thank you both for all you did for me and what you did for all of us. We miss you desperately.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. REED. Madam President, we are debating the President's nominee to succeed Justice Stephen Breyer, who has served this country admirably and with great distinction.

As a law student, I was fortunate to have Justice Breyer as an adviser, and I remain grateful for his guidance, encouragement, and counsel as I began my legal career. I have immense respect and admiration for him as a Justice, but even more so as a person.

When Justice Breyer announced his retirement, I stated my belief that the next Justice on the Supreme Court should be someone with Justice Breyer's integrity, independence, and keen intellect—someone with real-world experience who reflects the depth and breadth of the American people. You could not find someone who better fits that description than Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, and I rise today in wholehearted support of her nomination to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court is a powerful arbiter of justice in our Nation, with few checks on the decisions of the Justices once they are on the Court. Therefore, a vote on a Supreme Court nominee is one of the most consequential that any Senator can cast. The Constitution makes the Senate an active participant, along with the President, in the confirmation of a Supreme Court Justice.

Article II, section 2, clause 2 of the Constitution states that nominees to the Supreme Court shall only be confirmed "by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate." The Senate's role in the confirmation process places an important democratic check on America's judiciary. As a result, this body's consent is both a constitutional requirement and a democratic obligation. It is in upholding our constitutional duties as Senators to give the President advice and consent on his nominations that I believe we have one of our greatest opportunities and responsibilities to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

As I have stated before, my test for a nominee is simple and is drawn from the text, the history, and the principles of the Constitution. A nominee's intellectual gifts, experience, judgment, maturity, and temperament are all important, but these alone are not enough. I need to be convinced that a nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court will live up to both the letter and spirit of the Constitution. The nominee needs to be committed not only to enforcing laws but also to doing justice.

The nominee needs to be able to make the principles of the Constitution come alive—equality before the law, due process, full and equal participation in the civic and social life of America for all Americans, freedom of conscience, individual responsibility, and the expansion of opportunity. The nominee also needs to see the unique role the Court plays in helping balance the often conflicting forces in a democracy between individual autonomy and the obligations of community, between the will of the majority and the rights of the minority. A nominee for the Supreme Court needs to be able to look forward to the future, not just back-

wards. The nominee needs to make the Constitution resonate in a world that is changing with great rapidity.

Judge Jackson passes these tests with flying colors. Beyond her unquestioned intellectual gifts, her legal career over the past two decades demonstrates that she has the deep fidelity to equality, justice, and the Constitution required to be our next Supreme Court Justice.

We want Justices to be familiar with the Federal court system. Judge Jackson is. Indeed, soon after law school, Judge Jackson chose to clerk at three levels of the Federal courts, gaining valuable insights into the courtroom and learning directly from incredible jurists, including Judge Bruce Selya of Rhode Island, who was President Reagan's nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, as well as Justice Breyer himself.

We want Justices to understand that a guilty verdict involves the hard task of deciding the appropriate punishment. So while many of her law school classmates likely plotted paths to law firm partnerships, she chose instead to serve as Assistant Special Counsel and, later, Commissioner and Vice Chair at the U.S. Sentencing Commission, working to prevent unjust disparities in sentencing.

We want Justices to embody the fundamental notion of fairness at the heart of our justice system, that defendants have a right to counsel and must be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. So Judge Jackson chose to serve as a Federal public defender. If confirmed, she will bring this valuable, real-life perspective to our highest Court, where it is very much needed.

Over the past 10 years, first as a district judge and then as a circuit judge, Judge Jackson has been evenhanded and impartial in her decisions from the bench, without regard to partisanship, personal views, or ideology. Her opinions showcase an admirable commitment not only to fairness but to transparency. She takes the time to ensure that the parties fully understand her rulings and that the record clearly captures her thought process in deciding a case. She does not hide the ball—there are facts, there are arguments, and everyone is invited to read and understand them.

Beyond her career choices and accolades, she demonstrated her judgment, maturity, and equanimity during her recent confirmation hearings. In the face of hours of questioning, some of it quite pointed, political, and discomfiting, she showed incredible patience, resilience, and grace. Her independence, integrity, and deep understanding of the Constitution shined through in her answers. Her cool in that crucible was not only admirable, it was inspiring.

Judge Jackson is a trailblazer, not in the least because she is the first Black woman and first Federal public defender nominated to the Supreme